



**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT
NEW YORK'S NEW CROSSBOW LAW
Effective date 2011**

Be sure to check DEC's web-site (www.dec.ny.gov) for updates to this FAQ

The Basics

Question: What is the new law, and when was the bill signed?

Answer: During the 2010 Legislative Session, Assembly bill 924-e/Senate bill 6793-b was passed. Governor Paterson signed this bill into law on September 17, 2010. The bill may be read in its entirety by going to <http://assembly.state.ny.us> and using the bill search feature to look for "A-924-e" or "S-6793-b."

Question: Since the bill was signed, does this mean it's in effect during the fall of 2010?

Answer: **No.** Although the bill is now law, the major changes do not go into effect until February 1, 2011. **This means that you cannot use a crossbow until 2011.**

Question: Does the bill expire?

Answer: Yes. The bill will expire on December 31, 2012, unless the Legislature and Governor decide to extend the law.

Question: Is a new or separate type of license required to use a crossbow?

Answer: No. You will simply need any of DEC's licenses that allow big game hunting. If you are using a crossbow during the late muzzleloading or bowhunting seasons, you will need to have the required privileges for those late seasons.

Question: Is a crossbow and a bolt defined in the new law?

Answer: Yes. The crossbow must have a stock with a working safety, and a minimum limb of 17 inches. It must have a minimum peak draw weight of 100 pounds, and a maximum peak draw weight of 200 pounds. The overall length (butt of stock to front of the limbs) must be at least 24 inches. A bolt (the term used for the "arrow" shot from a crossbow) must be at least 14 inches long (excluding the point).

Use of Crossbows

Question: I heard that I may use a crossbow during the early bowhunting season if I am hunting on private land. Is this true?

Answer: No. Crossbows may not be used by anyone during the early bowhunting season.

Question: When can I use a crossbow to hunt?

Answer: Only during the REGULAR firearms seasons in the Northern and Southern Zone, and during the LATE muzzleloading and bowhunting seasons, and starting **ONLY in 2011, and continuing until December 31, 2012.**

Question: May I use a crossbow during the late bowhunting season?

Answer: **Yes.** You may use a crossbow during the LATE special seasons (bowhunting and muzzleloading) after the close of the regular season.

Question: I have a note from my doctor regarding an injury that prevents me from using a regular bow. May I use a crossbow during the early bowhunting seasons?

Answer: No. The new law does not allow a disabled person (temporary or permanent) to use a crossbow during the early bowhunting seasons.

Question: I am disabled and I am unable to hold and pull a regular bow. May I use a crossbow?

Answer: No. In the past, you could obtain a special permit to hunt with a longbow (of any type) equipped with a special modification to draw and hold the bow string. The new law allows DEC to adopt regulations to permit the modified longbow. In 2011, DEC will prepare regulations to implement the new law and a special permit will no longer be needed.

Question: I am 70 years old (or older). May I use a crossbow during the early bowhunting seasons?

Answer: No. The new law does not allow a senior hunter to use a crossbow during the early bowhunting seasons.

Question: May I use a crossbow in the **bowhunting only areas** of New York, such as Westchester County, parts of Albany and Monroe counties, and Suffolk County)?

Answer: No. However, you may use a crossbow in Suffolk County during the January firearms season for deer.

Question: May I use a crossbow during the early muzzleloading seasons in the Northern Zone?

Answer: No.

Question: May I use a crossbow to hunt small game, such as wild turkeys?

Answer: No. Crossbows may only be used to hunt big game (deer and bear).

Question: May I use a crossbow at night?

Answer: No.

Question: Are the restrictions on the use of crossbows the same as a firearm or bow?

Answer: Yes. A crossbow may not be loaded in or on a motor vehicle, it may not be discharged within 500 feet of an occupied building or school, it may not be discharged across a highway, or in areas where the discharge is presently prohibited for a bow or firearm.

Question: What tags would a crossbow hunter use to tag their deer?

Answer: During the regular season, a crossbow hunter could use a Deer Management Permit (DMP) or their regular big game tag (antlered deer only). During the late bowhunting and muzzleloading season, crossbow hunters could use a DMP or their special season bow and muzzleloading tags (either-sex or antlerless only). Additionally, crossbow hunters could use their unfilled regular season tag for deer of either sex during the late bow or muzzleloading season.

Question: Are Junior Hunters allowed to use a crossbow to hunt deer or bear?

Answer: Yes, once they complete the crossbow safety training.

Question: What kind of broadhead may I use on my crossbow?

Answer: You must use the same type of broadhead lawful for hunting big game with a longbow. The broadhead must have two or more cutting edges, it may not be barbed, and it must be at least 7/8 inches wide across the cutting surfaces.

Special Training Requirements

Question: Are there any special training requirements before I can use a crossbow to hunt deer or bear?

Answer: Yes. The new law requires you to complete training in the safe use of a crossbow.

Question: Where can I obtain this training?

Answer: DEC will develop a training program for new hunters using the existing hunter education program. For current hunters, DEC will develop on-line and home study materials on crossbow safety. DEC will announce when these materials are available.

Question: Are Junior Hunters allowed to use a crossbow to hunt deer or bear?

Answer: Yes, once they complete the crossbow safety training.

SUMMARY

- **You cannot use a crossbow in 2010. You must wait until 2011.**
- You may only use crossbows during a regular firearms season or during the late muzzleloading and late bowhunting seasons.
- There are no special provisions for the use of crossbows for disabled persons or hunters 70 years old (or older).
- The existing law about the use of "modified longbows" will be implemented differently. Instead of a special permit, DEC will adopt regulations to allow the use of modified longbows.
- This law expires on December 31, 2012, unless the Legislature and Governor agree to an extension.
- DEC believes that crossbows should be available to all hunters during all seasons in which other bowhunting equipment is allowed. In this manner, crossbows may meaningfully increase hunters' ability to enjoy the bowhunting experience, and can play a valuable role in deer population management.